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A DISSERTATION OF APPROX. 10,000 WORDS

ON

"THE EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF CHARLOTTE MASON"

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Education is a subject on which the last word will never be said. Experiments are made, careful observations taken, new knowledge sifted and applied, and results all carefully set down for the benefit of the person in the working situation - the teacher standing in front of his class. Even he, of course, is not the important factor in the whole process - the child is. But, teaching machines apart, it is the teacher with whom the child has to deal, it is upon him he has to depend. Ideally, the teacher should be a mixture of scientist, artist and saint, but in the absence of such rare creatures, children have to put up with whoever is their lot, be he competent or not.

Of primary importance, therefore, is the attitude of the teacher to the pupils under his care. The law, in its wisdom, places the teacher "in loco parentis" - he is obliged to treat the children as he would his own sons and daughters. Needless to say, there are bad parents, just as there are bad teachers, but by and large it is true to say that most teachers are deeply concerned for their juvenile charges, and have their interests at heart.

But human beings, even little ones, are complex creatures! No two human beings are exactly alike; each person is unique in his physiological and psychological makeup. It follows from this, then, that each child must be reckoned as an individual, as a unique personality, and should be treated as such. It is the custom among cultured adults to treat each other with courtesy, respect and consideration, and just because children are relatively unimportant and without influence in the social sense, this should not be taken as an excuse for treating children with less respect than one would treat fellow adults. This does not mean, of course, that such attributes as discipline, leadership and guidance that one usually associates with the pupil-teacher relationship will thereby be placed in jeopardy. One must at all times strive to maintain a sense of proportion.

The teacher must, above all, never forget his tremendous moral responsibility to the children in his charge. Whatever the influences of the child's home and general social background, the teacher must always remember that, educationally speaking, he stands before his class as a representative of humanity in general, and it is his simple duty to interpret the world in which we live faithfully and sympathetically, as interpreted it surely must be. It must never be forgotten, either, that fond mothers and fathers are entrusting teachers with their most precious possessions of all - their children! An Irish proverb has it that nobody's sweetheart is ugly, and by the same token one may be sure that the most repulsive brat that ever troubled the playground peace is some mother's darlin'.

It will happen, of course, that some children will show their teacher - however seriously and conscientiously he takes his job - scant regard for his ideals and aims. Children, like Kipling's single men in barracks, don't grow into plaster saints, and the teacher will have to take many a hard knock to his pride and his sensitivity. But his heart must be large enough, his mind understanding enough, his spirit hopeful enough to accept and deal with, if at all possible at a super-personal level, all the mischief, misbehaviour and even downright malice he may meet in the children in his care. It may not be easy to instil respect for person and property in a tough, rebellious child, but the attempt must nevertheless be made. This is the kind of wilfulness, as Miss Mason points out, that is actually detrimental to the child and not, as many suppose indicative of that most desirable attribute, a strong will.

"The business of the infant," decalres Miss Mason, "is to perceive and receive, and these he does day in and day out." As Wordsworth put it, it is

"As if its whole vocation
Were endless imitation."

Rudolf Steiner likened the toddler to the human eye, in that it reflects absolutely faithfully the outside world. This tremendous capacity for imitation should give us pause to reflect as to our own influence on the children. If parents speak with any kind of accent, this is faithfully copied by the growing child, even whole expressions and the intonations of voice in which they are delivered. When the full possible implications of the result of being the object of such close emulation are realised, it becomes at once a frightening and a humbling experience. It becomes clear that our duty is to make ourselves worthy of imitation in thought, word and deed. Later, during school years, the teacher# stands before the child as representative of Truth, Beauty and Goodness, and this realisation also places a great onus on his shoulders. He is the person mainly responsible for the interpretation to the child of the great and mysterious outer world, and he must be continuously on his guard lest undesirable impressions slip through. Later still, the imitative tendency gives way to a blind, almost pathetic belief in the grown-up, and the authority he stands for. (Miss Mason had quite a lot to say concerning the question of authority, and we will return to it later.) For now, let it be said that this authority must not - dare not - be taken lightly by the parent or the educator; he must above all be worthy of the trust placed in him by the child, and the confidence he arouses in him.

Miss Mason's nervousness about possible unhealthy influences of teacher on pupil would scarcely be warranted in the schools of today. The atmosphere she was accustomed to was certainly more restrictive than it is nowadays, when social intercourse

between teacher and pupil and pupil and classmate is far more open and free. Children, if they are to grow up emotionally stable, need opportunities for exercising their feelings. Nothing is worse than a teacher who dotes on one particular child or a set of favourites, or perhaps even plays uncle to the whole class. On the other hand, he should not be a poker-faced automaton, registering no reaction whatsoever to the children around him. Of course teachers have feelings, both positive and negative in character, but they must be careful how and when they show them. Positive feelings such as sympathetic concern, enthusiasm, helpfulness, approval and general encouragement need little in the way of curbing, but one should be sparing with such emotions as dislike, impatience, anger, spite and the temptation to make sarcastic or damaging remarks. Children, as emotional beings, do require emotional responses from the fellow-beings in their environment in order to bring about their own emotional stability. Doubtless, they will evoke emotional responses of all kinds, positive and negative, from their classmates in and out of school, but the teacher, as a responsible adult, must do his best to practise self-control and to concentrate on the positive approach at all times. Incidentally he would, of course, be setting the children a good example!

Another aspect of the necessity for emotional response to the child is that he feels himself accepted into the particular social milieu in which he finds himself, and this feeling is of great importance to him. Each human being is of necessity shut up inside his own private world of thought and feeling. The need to communicate with other beings of like nature is absolutely basic, and social contacts are therefore necessary for the very health of the ego. The broader the social contacts, the more likely the child is to find a kindred spirit, one with whom he can share either a lasting interest or passing whim. If his personality has any "corners" they are more likely to get knocked off, so that in time it may present a more harmonious profile. Thus the more social contacts a child has, the more balanced his personality is likely to be. He is then far less likely, as Miss Mason fears, to have an unhealthy "crush" on any particular teacher or fellow-pupil. Every teacher should be aware of the very great importance of social intercourse among the children. After all, the more socially-minded people are, the more Society as a whole will benefit in the long run. This is another way of "educating for the future."

Miss Mason deprecated the "pointing of the moral with a thousand tedious platitudes," saying that "children are not to be fed morally like young pigeons on pre-digested food." She rightly recognized that every child, "even the rudest", is endowed with the capacity for love and all its manifestations. She also recognized the great instinct for justice, for fair play, that every child possesses. For a teacher to be unfair

to a certain individual or the class as a whole brings far greater resentment than punishment, harsh but roundly deserved, for an open breach of discipline. Pointing the moral, giving finite moral precepts, is like giving the corpses of ideas instead of the ideas themselves. In any case, adult conceptions of good and evil given as direct instruction are apt to have little, if any, effect, and abstract moral instruction should therefore be avoided. It is more desirable - and infinitely more effective - to present full-blooded biographies of good men and evil men in such a way that emotions are thoroughly roused, evoking pleasure in the good and displeasure in the evil. (It must be said, in this connection, that credit is due to the television writers who stick uncompromisingly to the unwritten law that the "good guys" must always bring the "bad guys" to grief; that crime, however spectacular, simply does not pay, and that honesty is decidedly the best policy.)

Thus, if aesthetic judgement is fostered in this manner, morality awakens of its own accord. It is the duty of parent and teacher alike to have respect for the freedom of the child, so that his spirit may be free and untrammeled. The dawning of profound fundamental truths is a great experience for the child and one, moreover, that should not be denied him. Understanding that dawns in this way is particularly valuable from a moral standpoint. The time for dealing with abstract moral notions comes after puberty, with the developing capacity for abstract, rational thinking, and the child's growing ability to reflect, analyse, and form his own opinions. It is up to the teacher to lay a good foundation of examples of moral workings in the lives of actual human beings, so that when the time comes for the child to make his own decisions, he will be supported in them from previous proxy experiences, if not from actual ones. Thus is more likely to arise inner truth - justice in word and action.

Miss Mason held that "children are not born good or bad, but with possibilities for good and for evil." She shared this contention with the writer of Ecclesiasticus (18:8):

"What is man, and whereto serveth he?
What is his good, and what is his evil?

It is unlikely that anyone nowadays would disagree with her; man has the choice between good and evil, and one may only encourage individuals to make the right choice. She held that "man has an urgent, incessant, irrepressible need of the infinite;" man is not, as many imagine, completely self-sufficient. Man, inasmuch as he is a physical being, needs food for the body; inasmuch as he is a being of soul, he needs the emotional stimuli we have spoken of, and inasmuch as he is a spiritual being, he needs the things of the spirit. If there is some malfunction of the physical body, it is instantly recognized that he is sick, and a physician called to attend. Malaises

of the soul and spirit are not so easily recognized and treated. The cultivation of a true sense of social responsibility is without doubt a great help in the maintenance of moral balance. One should, perhaps, stimulate the childish interest in everything concerning the world around him; this will include people, of course! All healthy children possess enquiring minds, and love finding things out for themselves; and we do them and ourselves a great favour by giving them hints and tips as to how to go about finding things out for themselves. One should stress that the whole world is Man's birthright, belonging as much to the child as anyone else - and vice versa, of course! We should make it clear to the child that we have a responsibility to each other, to the Earth on which we live, to the animals that share it with us, and to the plants that clothe it to our mutual advantage. One should stress the importance of finding out as much as possible about the earth itself, about the plants that grow on it, the animals, domestic and wild, that help to maintain the balance of nature, and also about the peoples who live in other parts of this same world. Thus the importance of oneself and other beings in forming links in the whole of Creation should be brought home to each individual child. In this way one would hope to instil a sense of social responsibility with the whole world as our village. The question is bound to arise: "Who is my neighbour?" Selfishness is perhaps the greatest of sins; we all recognize the wrong ethics that follow from self-centredness, but we are all apt, nevertheless, to remain stubbornly selfish.

Children should be made to realise that life itself is a challenge, that every day brings its own little difficulties, its own little obstacles to be overcome. While attempting to foster a spirit of adventure and enterprise in children, one should stress the virtues of possessing physical and moral courage, as this they will need plenty of in later life. "Having a go" helps maintain one's self-respect, bolsters one's self-confidence, widens one's experience. If one doesn't exactly succeed in one's enterprises, well, one has had the satisfaction of having tried. And most people respect a good trier.

"Mind," says Miss Mason, "is of its nature infinitely and always conscious, and to speak of the unconscious mind is a contradiction in terms. But what is meant is that the mind thinks in ways of which we are unconscious; and that our business is to make ourselves aware by much introspection, much self-occupation, of the nature and tendencies of this 'unconscious region'". It would perhaps not be going too far to say that one of the achievements of the science of the last hundred years or so has been to rob man of his spirit and give him a mind; to take away his soul and give him a psyche; to take away his body and give him a mechanism. Together with the de-spiritualising of man has come about the de-spiritualising of the universe. The modern approach to man and the world is

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entirely mechanistic-materialistic. There exists a certain dangerous and pernicious lack of respect for Life in its diverse manifestations. It would perhaps be fair to say that never before in the history of civilization has there ever been a poorer understanding of "the spirit" and spiritual matters. In fact "spirit" has become something of a "dirty word." Science denies its existence entirely. Theologians and philosophers argue mildly, nervous of being caught out saying the wrong thing. Theologians are perhaps the worst hypocrites - or the more honest fools. They talk blithely about "the spirit" when it is obvious from the concepts they use that they have taken them from the realms of the psychological, not the spiritual. The theologian, being forced to express himself in psychological terms, has the professional psychologist to deal with, and he usually gets the worst of the affray. The psychologist, as suggested just now, has taken away man's soul and replaced it by a mere psyche, a bundle of complexes and inhibitions. Developing man no longer rises from the realms of the soul to those of the spirit; he descends from those of the conscious to those of the unconscious. It is the "nature and tendencies" of these regions that Miss Mason would have us study. We shall now see why.

The approach of the psychological experimenter is entirely empirical, and the rapid rise of his science and the close application of psychological techniques to exploit humankind is a phenomenon characteristic of the mid-twentieth century. Mass suggestion and persuasion, subliminal indoctrination, motivational research, and other such practices - the average human being is defenceless against them. What can be done to combat the insidious influences of the professional mind-benders? One tragic aspect of these sorry practices is that quite often it is the teenager who is the target for psychologically-loaded advertising techniques which are aimed at parting the dupe from his money easily and often. Adolescents enjoying the thrill of opening their first pay-packets, and indulgent parents are easy meat for the persuasive advertisers. These individuals care little for how they get results as long as they get them - in terms of f.s.d. The teacher, feeling concern for his pupils, naturally resents this kind of insidious encroachment upon the freedom of himself and his charges. His weapon must be to train and stimulate the critical faculties of his pupils, to enhance as much as possible their powers of discrimination. He must sharpen their insight, so that they may not fall prey so easily to the "hidden persuaders." Fortunately many teachers, fully aware of the problem, take pains to point out ^{to their} pupils how they are being "got at", and in some schools ^{theirs} results of motivational research and their bearing on advertising have been very encouraging.

Turning now to the question of authority, Miss Mason maintains that "the two principles of authority and docility act in every life precisely as do those two elemental principles

which enable the earth to maintain its orbit, the one drawing it towards the sun, the other as constantly driving it into space." In other words, it is as unwise for the child to be subjected to over-strict authoritarianism as it is for him to be given absolute licence to do just what he wishes, in case he becomes "inhibited." "Order is heaven's first law" indeed, and cosmos is infinitely preferable to chaos! The worst position, perhaps, for the child to find himself in is exemplified in evidence submitted to the Central Advisory Council for Education and published under the title "Half Our Future" - the so-called Newsom Report: "There were so many rules that no-one could remember them, but no actual discipline as such. No two teachers were alike. This left us in a state of perpetual unbalance." This serves to show how very important it is that an orderly atmosphere prevails; children feel secure when they are aware of the behavioural boundaries beyond which they may not go, provided these boundaries are firmly indicated and maintained. The principle of "ordered freedom" - a happy mean between rigid authoritarianism and a kind of pseudo-freedom - may of course be applied to class work itself. Thus children may be encouraged to choose their own "topic" or "project", only to be ordered, advised and guided by their teacher. Common sense is clearly the criterion in such cases; balance must be preserved.

Young children look up to their elders - parents, teachers, older siblings - as superior beings, and as such naturally invested with some degree of authority. Their knowledge of the world and of life is unbounded - or so it seems to the junior child - and their air of self-assurance together with the young child's lack of it makes it something of a relief to be divested of responsibility, and to be subjected to authority. Teachers find themselves, by dint of their calling, in places of authority, and if this status were not maintained chaos would result. It is their first duty to warrant it, then to wield it wisely. Above all, they must be consistent in their behaviour, reasonable and approachable, being as much responsible to their charges as being responsible for them. This, as Miss Mason points out, calls for tact and judgement on the part of the teacher, and he must not find himself lacking in this respect. We have already mentioned the fact that the teacher must be fair, but just, when dealing with children. In the heat of the moment, when there has been a breach of discipline or social behaviour, the teacher - and the pupil for that matter - may act and speak unwisely and hurtfully, even unreasonably. Disciplinary matters should be dealt with when feelings are more detached, when sweet reason is more likely to be recognized and exercised.

Perhaps one of the most important things to do is firstly to secure the attention of the class, and then hold it. Just how this is done is the measure of a person's skill as a teacher; in any case it indicates that teaching is more of an art than a science. Children who are absorbed in their work generally

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cause little trouble, inside the classroom or out of it. Behavioural problems usually arise through idleness, and it is against a child's nature to be idle. If one does not occupy him he will, so to speak, occupy himself! With this in mind, the teacher should always do his best to stimulate interest and curiosity concerning the most diverse things imaginable. The child's range of experience is much narrower than the adult's, and it is the business of parent and educator to widen this range. Moreover, this may well be made enjoyable as well as instructive. We may have collected foreign stamps at some time or other in our youth, for example. Well, it was an absorbing, entertaining and instructive - maybe even profitable - hobby while our interest was yet quickened. We enjoyed collecting stamps then, even if we don't collect them now; very well, then, at least one should introduce stamp collecting and its potential joys to the children in our care. And so, of course, to other more or less enjoyable, instructive and entertaining hobbies and pastimes.

The element of enjoyment incidental to the acquisition of knowledge should, of course, be the means to the desired end, and not an end in itself. Lessons should certainly not degenerate into a kind of glorified play; as Miss Mason rightly points out, any "play way" should be used as adjuncts to, not substitutes for, education. She contends that "children have a natural aptitude for literary expression which they enjoy in hearing or reading and employ in telling or writing." Creative writing is very much in vogue nowadays, and it is usually much enjoyed, especially by the abler children. No longer is the nicely-polished piece turned out especially for the school magazine, but imaginative prose writing and "free verse" composition are encouraged on all sides. Examples of this kind of work, some of it of a surprisingly high standard, may be found in such books as "The Excitement of Writing", edited by A.B. Clegg, and "Young Writers, Young Readers" edited by Professor Boris Ford. It has been found that higher the class of literature the children are exposed to and encouraged to read, the higher is the standard of their written work. This is splendid vindication for the oft-stressed axiom of Miss Mason, who never tired of saying that children should read nothing but the very best books by the very best authors. The establishment of school libraries, and the abundance of really first-class children's books of fiction and non-fiction is certainly of great assistance to teachers and pupils alike.

"Our business," says Miss Mason, "is to find out how great a mystery a person is qua person." Children, we know, are personalities in their own right; they come into the world with varying degrees of potential qualities. Some are intellectually brilliant, others artistic and deeply-feeling, again others extremely practically-minded. It is the simple duty of every teacher to be alive to any hidden talents his pupils may possess, and to foster and encourage their development

as much as possible. There is surely a future Prime Minister sitting at a school desk at this very moment, and - who knows? - that desk may be in my classroom! "It is the duty of the parent and educator," said Rudolf Steiner, "to remove whatever hindrances block the emergence of the true ego of the child, so that he may stand in true freedom at our side. To do this means learning to serve Nature where it works in the holiest way - in the growing child." The mystery of the personality is a holy one - it is not to be violated. Miss Mason discusses at some length possible undesirable influences of teacher on pupil, of various positive and negative incentives for work, and so on. The teacher must always cultivate genuine concern for his educational charges, and always try to feel a sense of responsibility towards his vocation. The temptation is often present to take the line of least resistance, even if it is to the pupils' detriment; there are also the human hazards of illness, fatigue, impatience, even downright laziness to be guarded against. We may well take the advice of St. Paul: "Let your conversation be always gracious, and never insipid; study how best to talk with each person you meet." All this may sound rather idealistic; as if the teacher is called upon to be a superman or a saint. But a teacher, presumably, is a teacher by choice; it is his vocation to help others; in fact it behoves us all to help less fortunate and less gifted persons than ourselves. "Either teach them better if it be in thy power," said Marcus Aurelius, "or if it be not, remember that for this use, to bear with them patiently, was mildness and goodness granted unto thee."

There are to be found in Miss Mason's book "An Essay towards a Philosophy of Education" many ideas that find sympathetic and apposite echoes in the Newsom Report. In her book she mentions (p. 76) a school in which "but not one hour is spent in a three or four years' course on any sort of human knowledge, in any reading or thinking which should make the pupils better men and women and better citizens." Turning now to the Newsom Report we read (para. 84): "... it is not possible to offer a short and simple formula for the education of our pupils, in terms of additional lessons in English or more time in the workshop, or extra bits of knowledge in this subject or that. The significant thing is the total impact. Each additional year in full-time education ought to be assisting the pupils in their progress towards maturity, and equipping them a little better to play their part in the world." Miss Mason quotes the sorry state of things as she saw them a generation or so ago; things do not seem to have progressed much since then. She says (*ibid* p. 79): "But many of our young men and women go about more maimed than these (war wounded). They are devoid of intellectual interests, history and poetry are without charm for them, the scientific work of the day is only slightly interesting, their 'job' and the social amenities they can secure are all that their life has for them." The Newsom Report (para. 315) states: "The greatest service to the

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community, and there is none greater, will be as men and women who can be relied upon to make a success of their own lives and by the quality of their living to bring up their children to do the same."

All too often, according to Miss Mason, "boys and girls do not want to know; therefore they do not know." As the whole structure of education depends on boys and girls learning and knowing, one should pause and give consideration to such a statement. The prime agent in education is, as Miss Mason often stresses, attention. As mentioned before, it is the skill with which a teacher secures and holds the attention of his pupils that is the measure of his success as a teacher. Few teachers give lessons as inspired as they would like them to be, and with the child's educational life stretching as it does over ten years, there is bound to be a lot of wasted effort on the part of teacher and pupil. The very greatest responsibility devolves on the organizers and teachers in nursery and junior schools, for it is on their efforts that the secondary school teacher has perforce to build. The foundations must be secure and sound. Of course, those concerned with primary education have their own problems; but just as the junior stage must be anticipated by the nursery teacher, the secondary stage must be anticipated by the junior school teacher. Is, then, the purpose of primary education to prepare for secondary education? And the purpose of secondary education - what is that? To prepare the pupil for tertiary education? The men of gold and the men of silver, Robin Pedley assures us in his book "The Comprehensive School", may be fairly sure of a formal training in an institution for higher education. But the men of brass and the men of dress - what of them?

The art of living is perhaps the most difficult for human beings to master. The members of the animal kingdom are fortunate in being able to live their lives out unencumbered by such things as conscience, ambition, moral codes and statutory rights, to say nothing of the need to be educated - not merely trained, but educated. Animals can only be trained. Human beings ought to be educated, but as often as not they are merely trained. The men of gold are most carefully trained - to pass examinations; they even go to special schools called, quite baldly, Preparatory Schools. Here they are prepared for what is to come after - careful training for their "class". The men of silver are similarly trained, though it must be said that grains of culture are picked up on the way. This must be so, as the men of gold and silver generally have a fair modicum of intelligence, and anyway, they are expected to be au fait with certain aspects of lifemanship.

But we are mainly concerned with ordinary boys and girls, "half our future", the men of brass (brass can be made to shine!) and the men of dress. We have quoted the Newsom Report as stating that there is no short and simple formula for the

education of such children, but it is nevertheless plain that it is the education of "the whole human being" that is the aim. Such a phrase trips prettily off the tongue, but the implications, when reflected on, appear weighty and far-reaching. For a start, just what is the whole human being? And who is to decide the scale of priorities - which arts, which sciences, which practical subjects are most important? "Art is long, alas, and life is fleeting." What, then, are our pupils to be taught? The physiology of sex, how to mend a blown fuse, or the proportion of inert gases in the earth's atmosphere? The elements of first aid, how yeast works, or appreciation of Schubert's Unfinished Symphony? How local government works, party etiquette, or why Christmas Day falls on 25 December? Plainly, there must be some degree of discrimination, and one can only suppose that such discrimination may not be dictated by best overall considerations but by the availability of teachers, buildings, equipment and other facilities, not to mention the money to pay for them. The aim should surely be to send children out into the world who are physically healthy, psychologically well-adjusted, aware of the blessings and curses of life among humankind, and who have an ample reserve of spiritual strength with which to meet life with its fortunes and disasters, and who are able to treat those two impostors just the same.

The men of gold and of silver can at least be miserable in comfort, but life for the men of brass and the men of dross can be far from pleasant if their financial affairs are anyways tottery. One hears much talk of under-privileged classes without hearing much reference to their poor endowments in terms of brains. True, there always have been, and one supposes always will be hewers of wood and drawers of water, but should such menial workers be doomed to life-long restrictions in terms of cultural activities? Must life mean no more than beer and bingo, pools and pubs, sex and smoking, daily grind and nightly entertainment? The Workers' Educational Association, the Arts Council and various University Extra-Mural Departments do wonderful service, and on all sides one sees efforts towards the furtherance of culture. Even the B.B.C. and the commercial television companies are now finding that people are feeling the need to be educated as well as entertained. How often does one find adults bitterly regretting their own inattentiveness during their school years? Education, and the need for education, does not end at sixteen, twenty, forty or sixty. Man is a spiritual being, and is not satisfied merely with "bread and the circus." The fellow who spends hours in his armchair reading Hazlitt's essays; the girl who spends hours queuing in the rain for a seat at the ballet; the chap who slips down to the betting-shop during his lunch-hour break, and the woman who hurries her children off to bed before going to the local bingo hall are all products of our cultural age, and they all have a right to their aesthetic pleasures. All too often, however,

one meets people who have no confidence in their own powers of thinking. Foundations should be laid early in the school-child's educational life for clear self-dependent thinking to be possible later on, when balanced and considered opinions and judgements need to be made. This, however, is a matter we shall be returning to later.

"Everybody," states the Newsom Report (para. 315), "needs an education ~~of the imagination~~ of the imagination and the will to enlarge the area of his concern and acceptance of responsibility." These are brave words indeed, considering that selfishness is perhaps the prime sin of humankind. But it is heart-warming to read such words in an official report, and to realise that such words have been carefully weighed and are sincerely meant. So we have to educate the imagination and the will; but how, in terms of sheer teaching technique, is this to be done? Teachers, concerned with children in the classroom situation, are bound to deal in concepts. Should attempts perhaps be made to use concepts that are capable of metamorphosis, open-ended concepts that may grow and adapt themselves to growing mental powers and emotional maturity? Motivation is, as it were, a word of many parts, but should it not be possible to harness incentive so that wish may become intention, intention become resolution and resolution become determination, which is the supreme actualization of the will? How much more easily is the will stimulated by appeals to the feelings than by appeals to thinking! In this respect it may perhaps be profitable to take a few leaves out of the books of the psychological advertisers and the motivational research experts. They know a thing or two about incentive!

Life is anything but static. We are different beings from what we were yesterday and shall be different beings tomorrow, all on account of our experiences of today. But by the time our secondary school child has reached the age of sixteen the foundations have surely been laid for what is to follow in later life. Quite often by then patterns have been formed that will be followed faithfully for forty or fifty years. "Getting into a rut" is a grimly familiar phrase. One of mankind's greatest gifts is that of adaptability to his environment, and the same flexibility of his essential nature that allows of this is proof that he should be educated for life, not merely trained for a certain type of existence. To echo Miss Mason: "The days have gone by when the education befitting either a gentleman or an artisan was our aim."

Adolescents no longer accept things on the mere authority of parent or teacher; they are quick to form judgements and voice their opinions, and become critical or even rebellious. Unless a certain balance of the personality has been attained by dint of a harmonious education, existence may suddenly appear to be empty and pointless, and this may lead to all

kinds of aberrations and distorted views of life, perhaps even delinquency. Adolescence is a notoriously difficult phase in the growing-up process, and the heightened self-consciousness that it brings creates a certain feeling of loneliness. Youth clubs and associations may be eagerly sought in order to alleviate such a feeling, and in this regard they are a great boon to the social life of the country. By now the young person is in many respects a finished article, so to speak, and what errors have been made in his up-bringing cannot now be rectified - it is too late. Unless the feeling life has been developed, intellectualism is likely to prevail, and the disconcerted strivings of a suppressed emotional life may erupt in unexpected ways. Unless the element of will is wont to enter into the thinking, it may become lifeless and cramped, which is equally undesirable. How the newly developed individuality asserts itself in the world is the acid test of our efficiency - and efficacy - as parents and educators.

The motto of the P.N.E.U. is: "Education is an atmosphere, a discipline and a life." "We are limited," says Miss Mason, "to three educational instruments - the atmosphere of environment, the discipline of habit and the presentation of living ideas." Taking for consideration firstly that education is an atmosphere, we may say at once that the home environment of the child is more important than the school environment, and that each possesses a definite atmosphere. At school, much depends on the "tone" of the place - that indefinable something that may be felt rather than explained, that derives from the kind of life that is led by the pupils and teachers behind its walls. Quite often, it is the personality and character of the head teacher that is reflected in the tone of a school; again certain schools possess an atmosphere largely dictated by tradition, and so on. Similarly, the home atmosphere is something quite definite; generally, but not always, dependent on the temperament and life-habits of "Mum." There are, of course, many diverse factors that determine the atmosphere of the home. There are homes containing bookshelves lined with books by the world's finest authors, homes to which are delivered a sober daily newspaper and educational and cultural magazines. In such homes radio and television sets are usually used with discrimination, and current affairs and matters of topical interest discussed intelligently. There are homes, too, in which there are no bookshelves at all; in which the radio is blaring all day and the television set glaring all night; in which any conversation between parents and children is desultory and spasmodic, being carried on largely in monosyllables. Most homes, however, fall somewhere between these two extremes.

Just as a stimulating atmosphere should prevail at school, so it should prevail at home. There should be reasonable restraint and reasonable freedom, a generally ordered existence

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that is so important for a healthy and balanced up-bringing. Each person has a family, a social group, a national and even a greater ethnic background, but it must never be forgotten that each human being is an individual, possessing gifts and potentialities in unique proportions. These are bestowed on him by heredity, and the newborn infant represents an unknown quantity. It bears repetition that it is the divine duty of parent and teacher alike to become aware as far as possible of each individual child's peculiar assets and liabilities, so to speak, his peculiar capacities and abilities, shortcomings and difficulties, and spare no effort in assisting the child to overcome them. There has always been much discussion as to whether heredity or environment is more responsible for the shaping of the growing personality, and it is now generally agreed that they are roughly equivalent in influence. In fact, they should always be taken together, not separately. Who can say where the most "formative" years of the growing child fall, at what ages he is most "impressionable"? As an essentially imitative being, it cannot absorb what is not presented to it. In other words, unless the "developmental input" is available, the corresponding "behaviourist output" cannot be achieved. In our modern national cultural group, the animal needs of the infant are usually adequately met; nourishing food, reasonable maternal care and shelter from the elements are generally speaking not lacking. But man is a spiritual being, and has spiritual needs. Love, in the purest sense of the word, is perhaps the most important single human need, together with the sense of security that it brings. In the school environment, no teacher can succeed at his job unless he loves his pupils in a spiritual sense, a Christian sense. As mentioned before, Miss Mason seemed to be nervous of the possibilities of unhealthy attitudes arising between teacher and pupil, and it was perhaps shown that such fears would scarcely be warranted in modern schools.

Thus one may speak of the physical environment and the socio-cultural environment as the hammer that falls on the die of heredity, with the malleable individual between. This shapes the personality, but who shall gainsay the destiny that places a particular child in a particular environment with its concomitant influences? Fortunately, the national aim in the education sphere is "equal opportunity", and this goal may one day be achieved. Much is being done nowadays to offset the lack of a beneficial home atmosphere. Many schools, in the poorer districts especially, struggle hard to create a cultural atmosphere inside school itself, and organize various clubs and societies to provide opportunities for encouraging children's interests, hobbies and so on. This shows how, more than ever before, importance is being attached to the "atmosphere of environment."

As for education being a discipline, Miss Mason stresses that children should do as much work as possible themselves;

the "act of knowing" can only be performed by them. It is generally accepted nowadays that the teacher is inclined to do much work, and the children too little. It may be easier for the teacher to dole out indigestible lumps of learning, and the class to swallow them wholesale, but this leads inevitably to discomfort and dissatisfaction. The habit of attention should somehow be instilled into the children, but this depends on the skill of the teacher. Every teacher knows when he has lost the attention of his class, and if this happens often he should give his teaching technique thorough re-appraisal. In the words of a delegate to the United Nations: "The mind can only absorb what the seat can endure." Hard seats and forms are not noticed when the attention and interest are fully engaged, and if the teacher fails to secure attention the fault lies with him and not with the class. He must make sure that his teaching material is interesting and appropriate; try to make sure that the right atmosphere prevails in his classroom, see that he is not "going against the grain" of his pupils, and so on. On the other hand, he should not tolerate among his pupils habits of loose thinking, slovenly expression, carelessness and laziness. It is always tempting to take the line of least resistance, but this saps the character and the will. "It doesn't matter" is a dangerous attitude, for sooner or later all standards are apt to go by the board; it is the thin end of the wedge between the attitudes of proper and reasonable care and the indifference that leads to carelessness and eventually to couldn't-carelessness. Habits form the backbone of our daily lives, and it is part of the teacher's job to ensure that, as far as his influence goes, such habits are good and desirable ones. His efforts may well pall on the children, especially to start with, but it may well be, forty years on, that his old pupils will look back on their teacher with affection and thankfulness for teaching them habits in good living.

The third instrument of education, Miss Mason contends, is that education is a life. Supreme in the sphere of education is the Idea. She says: "Our business is to give children the great ideas of life, of religion, history, science; but it is the ideas we must give, clothed upon with facts as they occur, and must leave the child to deal with these as he chooses." The great importance of ideas can scarcely be stressed too much, but care must be taken to ensure that they are living ideas; that, as mentioned elsewhere, they are capable of metamorphosis as the child grows in knowledge and understanding. There must be no suspicion of absolute finality, so that the child receives the impression that the last word has been said on any given subject. Of course the training of the understanding and the proper acquisition of knowledge should in no wise be underestimated or neglected. But children should not be given what merely amounts to corpses of ideas, ideas already formed and finished; concepts that are ready-made, pre-fabricated in readiness for easy and convenient delivery by the teacher.

Ideas should, whenever possible, be enlivened by feeling and shot through with the activity of the will. It is surely a mistake to present finite adult concepts to the child, however cleverly scaled down and simplified.

Miss Mason was never tired of stressing that the human mind was no mere sac into which one tipped ideas, as rubbish into a bin. She emphasised that the mind was a kind of spiritual organism, with an appetite for knowledge and ideas, able to assimilate them as the body does foodstuffs. Ideas stimulate the life of the mind in a way that nothing else can. The world of ideas is more real than many people are apt to realise. It is interesting to note that in Danish secondary schools special courses have lately been introduced on the history of ideas, and the relationships of ideas to one another. Scientific and political advancement rely mainly on ideas, on sheer human inventiveness. The more ideas one has, the more adept one becomes in placing them in juxtaposition to each other, that whole new complexes or constellations of ideas may emerge. So it is with the child, whose imagination is extraordinarily fertile, and whose memory is exceptionally good.

Ideas have, as it were, a spiritual life of their own, and Miss Mason points out the very great danger in offering opinions to children instead of ideas. Opinions, whenever formed and finite, are again mere corpses of ideas - they cannot grow and develop in the mind of the child. Children are usually eclectic; they pick and choose wherever they wish, and it is up to the teacher to provide them with an abundance of ideas from which to choose. This, although at first sight it may not appear so, represents true economy in teaching from the point of view of the child.

"Education of the whole man", and "education for the full life" are phrases that often trip too easily off the tongue, with little thought given to them. Miss Mason stressed that a person should be "able, not only to earn his living, but to live." She believed passionately in "Continuation Schools" where a liberal education as well as a vocational education could be followed. She looked forward (in 1913) to the time when all children would stay at school until at least their sixteenth year. Due as this is in 1969, she could not have guessed that it would be 50 years before this would come to pass. Many people are not satisfied with the pattern of secondary education as it is today, and perhaps this is as it should be. There can be no progress without unrest. Miss Mason foresaw the increasing time for leisure activities that would come the way of the ordinary workers, the men of brass, and the great necessity for children to be equipped to use that leisure wisely and well. Higher education is still very much an ideal, and the County Colleges of the 1944 Education Act are still very much edifices in the

air. Valuable work is already being done, however, in the Village Colleges of Cambridgeshire, and the many Colleges of Further Education, some of which give residential courses on liberal studies. Technical Colleges, too, are expanding their Departments of Liberal Studies in an effort to broaden the bases of the courses offered. Vocational training is of course necessary, but just as a gentleman should know everything about something, he should also know something about everything!

The art of living is perhaps the most difficult art for human beings to learn, and it is gratifying to read the recommendations of the Newsom Report, and to see the efforts being made in secondary schools in preparing their last-year pupils for entry into the adult world. The Newsom Report (para. 210) recommends that "the school programme in the final year ought to be deliberately out-going - an initiation into the adult world of work and leisure." There are secondary schools that give their leavers special lessons on health, preparation for the family life, whys and wherefores of social behaviour, management of finances, and so on. Equally important, of course, are the opportunities, ideas and mental stimuli for a rich inner life. If these are lacking, pupils will be likely to resort to purely physical modes of recreation, physical sports such as football, tennis, and so on. Later on, with declining physical powers, they may be reduced to the mere watching of sport. (It is a fact that sports programmes of television and radio are the most popular of all programmes.) So much, then, for Miss Mason's Continuation Schools and Mr. Fisher's Saturday Field Clubs!

The two guides to moral and intellectual self-management to offer children are, according to Miss Mason, what may be called "the way of the will" and "the way of reason." She sharply differentiates between the mere "I want" of desire and idle whim and the stronger, attentive nature of the "I will" that gets things done. Reason may be a good servant but a bad master, but if the thinking powers are well trained and developed, there is little to fear. It is part of the task of the educator to bring into harmony in the child the functions of thinking and willing. It helps to bring about greater self-assurance and the ability to choose and discriminate - in short, to act in greater freedom. Miss Mason says that as children become mature enough to understand it, "they should be taught that the chief responsibility which rests upon them as persons is the acceptance or rejection of ideas." This finds a remarkable parallel in the Newsom Report (para. 112): "A pupil's secondary education cannot begin until he has enough experience behind him to enable him to make sensible judgements on what he is doing. It does not begin until and unless he makes those judgements."

Miss Mason rightly designates the function of the will

as the ability to choose, to make one's choice in as much freedom as possible. One is bound to add "in as much freedom as possible" because we are surrounded on all sides by insidious attempts to influence our freedom of choice, as mentioned elsewhere. Miss Mason is correct in saying that "with every choice we make we grow in force of character"; thus we make ourselves more independent of suggestion and other subversive influences. "The use of suggestion," she says, "as an aid to the will is to be deprecated, as tending to stultify and stereotype character." How much more true is this today, exposed as we are to mass suggestion from all sides. "His will," Miss Mason contends, "is the safeguard of a man against the unlawful intrusion of other persons." But what defence has such a man when his very freedom of choice is undermined, as was discussed earlier? Man's freedom must be a true one, not a spurious freedom of uninformed action, but freedom based on true insight and discrimination, that the choice may be deliberate and above all conscious. As Miss Mason points out, assaults on the bodies of others is a legal offence, but onslaughts on the mind, which can be much more harmful - what of them? She calls them "indecent"; more reprehensive epithets than this spring readily to mind. If "to fortify the will" was one of the great purposes of education in Miss Mason's day, how much more true is it today?

As regards the training of the will, Miss Mason draws a sharp distinction between those who are "wilful", i.e. those who have no control at all over their will, and those who really possess a strong will inasmuch as they are able to control themselves and their impulses. Vivid examples drawn from historical figures and contemporary life may be presented in order to help the children see the difference between control and lack of it. Insofar as a man wills, says Miss Mason, he is a true man. In other words, if man is sapped of his ability to express his will, his freedom of choice, freely and deliberately, the very humanity of man becomes placed in jeopardy. And this, without doubt, is a problem of very great urgency. It is so easy to relinquish one's freedom of choice, to dispense with the sheer effort of bothering to find out what one ought to do; it is so easy to take the line of least resistance, to follow the crowd, to conform to fashion, and so forth. The symptoms of mass hysteria exhibited by modern teenagers when in the presence of their "pop" idols is a frightening example of sheer lack of will, a deplorable lack of the ability to think and act as individuals.

"Conscience and reason have their say," says Miss Mason, "but will is supreme and the behaviour of the will is determined by all the principles we have gathered, all the opinions we have formed." This being so, it behoves us as teachers and educators to provide children with as many of

the great and imperishable ideas of the world's greatest thinkers down through history, and to encourage the thorough appraisal of them. We all agree with a great spirit such as Wilberforce, but are we not as much slaves, in another way, as the unfortunate negroes of the cotton-fields?

There are many quotations one would like to make from the very important chapter on "The Way of the Will" in Miss Mason's book "An Essay towards a Philosophy of Education", and one may be forgiven for making yet another: "Will, free will, must have an object outside itself." In other words, if the will of a person serves only the selfish ends of that person, such a person is a slave to his own desires - he is, in point of fact, "wilful". Thus such a person is "unfree", his choices are all made in the same direction, and he is bound to be in constant turmoil aimed at the fulfilment of his selfish desires. In direct apposition of this, we may quote the heavenly host which proclaimed "peace on earth" only "to men of good will." It is only the man who is at peace with himself, who can control the impulses of his will, who is free, and thus really happy and contented. One may clearly recognize the wrong ethics that follow from self-centredness, but how strong is the temptation, nevertheless, to remain stubbornly selfish!

As for the Way of the Reason, Miss Mason says that children should be given ample opportunities for reasoning things out for themselves, and for following the reasoning-processes of others. There is a great difference between talking at children, and talking to them and encouraging them to talk back. Thus, by examples as they arise, the teacher should point out how false conclusions may be easily - and erroneously - arrived at; perhaps by "jumping to conclusions", or perhaps because of false logic, or even wrong premises. It is amazing just how illuminating the Psalmist's hasty saying: "All men are liars", when allowed to be reasoned out by children, can be! Such examples as this can have considerable impact on the childish mind, and can serve as a warning to think things out carefully and with deliberation. "Reasons for" and "reasons against" are far safer as guiding lines than logical processes, which are not always to be trusted! Thus children should be given opportunities for detecting fallacies in any given argument, and when attacks upon the will are considered, for example the effects of certain kinds of advertisements, reasons why advertising matter is presented in such and such a form should be carefully examined and, if possible, clarified. In this way attacks on one's freedom of choice become less dangerous; "forewarned is fore-armed." The teacher should try to show his pupils the reasons for things, so that the things themselves may be better understood. Wrongness usually derives from misunderstanding of the rightness inhering in any given matter. Reasons themselves as well as

the reasoning processes themselves must be given a thorough airing, especially in front of adolescents whose critical, intellectual and analysing powers are particularly active. In fact, this should be part of the preparation for the entry into the adult world on leaving school. It is mainly a question of increasing the awareness of such school-leavers, so that they may be better able to take their places as individuals in society, not mere puppets to be manipulated by minds stronger and cleverer than their own. One may well echo Professor Wilson: "I have no doubt at all that it is the business of the teacher as educator to introduce children to the spiritual obligation to be discriminating members of their society rather than passive conformers."

The three sorts of knowledge proper to a child are, according to Miss Mason: the knowledge of God, of Man, and of the Universe. Whilst admitting this, it is important to bear in mind that we as educators, are preparing children for life as it is today, whereas they will be making use of what they learn through, because or in spite of us in ten, twenty or thirty years' time, when social and other conditions may be quite different from what they are now. It is therefore of considerable importance to keep basic ideals before one, as a source of inspiration and guidance. What better aim, then, could one have than to foster in the children under one's care the highest possible regard for the three great impulses of human culture: Truth, Beauty and Goodness? At first sight this aim may appear somewhat grandiose and pretentious, but reflection will show that most worthwhile aims that teachers and educators can aspire to can be traced back to these "three graces." In the first place, the three great fields of human endeavour correspond to these three well-known ideals: Science directs its efforts towards the discovery of ultimate Truth; Art has as its aim the greatest Beauty, and Religion's prime purpose is to propagate the supreme virtue of Goodness. Thus it may be seen that these great principles are no mere abstractions, but that they touch onto every sphere of everyday life. Everything stems back to them and so, as an ideal, one should try to further these three great cultural impulses that have been responsible for Man's present progress along the path, steep and stony that it is, of civilization.

The principles of Truth, Beauty and Goodness find expression, in human terms, through the faculties of thinking, feeling and willing. It is the harmonizing of these three human attributes in the growing child that is the true task of every teacher and educator; that the child may find truth through his thinking, experience beauty through his feelings, and manifest goodness in his actions.